

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-6, 7-10 and 14-16 without prejudice.

Claims 1-10 (Cancelled)

11. (Original) A business method for managing orders on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a user interface for placing an order;

receiving an order from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the order received into one or more tag values representing predefined fields;

placing the tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the tag values so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the tag values;

retrieving contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the tag values the order; and

analyzing the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the tag values for the order and applying one or more rules for governing any discrepancies between the order and the contract tag values; and

sending an order to each of the trading partners if tag values for the order complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

12. (Original) The business method according to claim 11, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into one or more XML tag values

13. (Original) The business method according to claim 12, wherein in the step of parsing includes parsing the order received into predefined fields consisting of a price, a quantity, a delivery date and other business terms.

Claims 14-16 (Cancelled)

17. (Original) A computer readable medium containing programming instructions for managing orders on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment, the programming instructions comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a user interface for placing an order;

receiving an order from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the order received into one or more tag values representing predefined fields;

placing the tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the tag values so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the tag values;

retrieving contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the tag values the order; and

analyzing the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the tag values for the order; and

sending an order to each of the trading partners if tag values for the order complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

18. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 17, wherein the programming instruction of parsing includes parsing the order received into one or more XML tag values

19. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 18, wherein the programming instruction of parsing includes parsing the order received into predefined fields consisting of a price, a quantity, a delivery date and other business terms.

Claims 20 - 24 (Previously cancelled)